

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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R 060906Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6648

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 10711

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SOCI, ELAB, RP

SUBJECT: CBCP DELIVERS LETTER TO PRESIDENT

REF: MANILA 10535

BEGIN SUMMARY: LETTER TO PRESIDENT FROM CBCP DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 3. IDEA AND BROAD OUTLINES OF LETTER HAD BEEN APPROVED AT JULY MEETING OF CBCP. TIMING OF DELIVERY SHORTLY AFTER NOVALICHES RAID EVENTS PURELY COINCIDENTAL. BISHOP GAVIOLA THOUGH UNWILLING DISCUSS CONTENTS TOLD EMBASSY IT WAS GUTTED VERSION OF HARSHER LEAKED TEXT FLOATING AROUND TOWN. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT CHURCH IS IN-DEED ATTEMPTING TO RETURN TO MORE RELIGIOUS ROLE FOR TIME BEING. END SUMMARY.

1. BISHOP GAVIOLA (VICAR GENERAL OF ARMED FORCES) TODAY CONFIRMED TO EMBASSY THAT LETTER TO PRESIDENT MARCOS FROM CBCP (CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES) WAS FINALLY DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 3. IDEA AND BROAD OUTLINES OF LETTER, IF NOT EXACT WORDING, HAD BEEN APPROVED AT JULY MEETING OF CBCP (MANILA 8781). GAVIOLA UNWILLING DISCUSS CONTENTS OF LETTER BUT DID REVEAL IT WAS GUTTED VERSION OF LENGTHY LEAKED TEXT NOW FLOATING AROUND TOWN. HE SAID THAT IN LIGHT OF PRESIDENT'S RESPONSIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD VIGIL OF PRAYER, CATHOLIC HIERARCHY HAD

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NOT WANTED TO FOLLOW HARDLINE IN LETTER. GAVIOLA ALSO

NOTED THAT TIMING OF DELIVERY SHORTLY AFTER NOVALICHES RAID EVENTS AND RESULTANT VIGIL OF PRAYER ON SEPTEMBER 1 (REFTEL) WAS PURELY COINCIDENTAL. BISHOPS HAD ALL ALONG INTENDED THAT LETTER SHOULD BE DELIVERED SOME TIME AROUND END OF AUGUST.

2. LEAKED TEXT REFERRED TO ABOVE (EMBASSY HAS COPY) IS BROAD-RANGING DOCUMENT WHICH TAKES MARCOS TO TASK FOR "CLIMATE OF FEAR", SUPPRESSION OF LABOR RIGHTS, "SPECTRE OF INDEFINITE DETENTION", ETC. IT ASKS THAT "BOLD STEPS BE TAKEN TO GRADUALLY LIFT MARTIAL LAW" AND URGES MARCOS TO RESTORE FREEDOM OF SPEECH THROUGH THE MASS MEDIA AND TO FREE POLITICAL DETAINEES. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, THE TEXT LAUDS THE PRESIDENT FOR THE IMPROVED PEACE AND ORDER SITUATION IN MOST PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AND THE "VASTLY IMPROVED" ECONOMIC SITUATION. THE PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES EDITION OF SEPTEMBER 5 CARRIED A UPI ACCOUNT WHICH APPEARS TO BE BASED UPON THIS TEXT.

COMMENT: THE EMBASSY HOPES TO SECURE AN AUTHENTIC COPY OF THE LETTER AS DELIVERED SHORTLY. IN MEANTIME, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT CHURCH IS INDEED ATTEMPTING TO RETURN TO MORE REGIGIOUS ROLE FOR TIME BEING (REFTEL). IMPLICATION OF GAVIOLA COMMENTS IS THAT CHURCH NOT INCLINED TO PURSUE ABRASIVE TACTICS.
SULLIVAN

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